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JUNIOR-COLLEGE COURSES IN 1920-21. I

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Except for the brief treatment given in McDowell's study¹ of the junior-college movement, we have had no description of the curricular situation in the junior colleges throughout the country. In view of the rapidly rising level of attention to this movement and the accompanying desire to evaluate it, as well as to know what to do in places where the installation of this new unit in our system is contemplated, some interest should attach to the following description of the curricular offering in fifty-eight widely scattered junior colleges. Although evaluation of the situation is not left entirely out of account, what is reported here is descriptive rather than critical.

The sources of the data used in making this study were the bulletins or catalogues of junior colleges. These were supplied upon request sent to the heads of those schools listed as junior colleges in the Educational Directory of the Bureau of Education, and of certain other schools in which the writer had learned through one source or another that junior-college work is being offered. Of the total number of bulletins examined, twenty-three were issued by public and thirty-five by private junior colleges. Sixteen of the former group may be classed as municipal in the sense of being established as parts of city, township, or county school systems, the remainder being state institutions, four of which are normal schools. Fourteen of these public institutions are in North Central states, and seven are in California. Nineteen of the private group are schools for women. Nine of the private schools are in Missouri, eight in other North Central states, and eighteen—a full half—are in southern states.

Little explanation of the method used in this study is required at this point, both because of its simplicity and because it may be

¹ "The Junior College," *United States Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 35*, 1919, pp. 50-53. Washington: Department of the Interior.

inferred from the presentation of the findings as here reported. Mention should be made of the necessity of reducing all credits to the same unit—the semester hour. While there are other units in use, the one named is the most common. Where class periods of less than an hour's duration were reported, they were recomputed to conform to this predominant length. Of course, full accuracy in estimating credit cannot be claimed for every instance, but there has been a close approximation to the true situation.

The classification of courses given in the catalogues was not always followed. For the sake of uniformity and consistency such changes of classification were made as listing household physics with courses in home economics under occupational training rather than under science, educational psychology with education and not with psychology, etc.

Doubtless the amount of work and the number of courses reported in the catalogues are sometimes in excess of what is actually being taught. Those who have had contact with schools during their early aspirational stages will know that classes in some courses do not always materialize. In some instances courses were found to be only partially described and without indication of the amounts of time or credit to be assigned to them. These were omitted from the tabulations on the ground that they probably were described without expectation of immediately putting them into operation. No effort was made to check up on the proportion of courses listed in which instruction was going forward. It may, therefore, in one sense be said that what is described here is the curricular offering which those in charge of the junior colleges plan to put into full operation in the very near future, rather than that which is fully representative of the situation in 1920-21. It must be apparent that if a faithful description of the work actually going forward in junior colleges is desired, the method here used would hardly be satisfactory.

The description which follows is divided into three main parts: first, an effort to give an impression of the total offering; second, a statement of required subjects and courses; and, finally, a presentation in detail of the offerings in each large field.

THE TOTAL OFFERING AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

An impression of the total situation is provided through an interpretation of Table I, which presents, in addition to the average total number of semester hours in all courses offered and the range of this distribution (see foot of table), the average amount offered in each subject or subject-group, the number of junior colleges including no offerings in each of the fields listed, the ranges for each subject, and the average percentage which the offering in each field is of the total offerings. These quantitative descriptions are provided for public junior colleges, for private junior colleges, and for all junior colleges in a single group.

TABLE I
CURRICULAR OFFERINGS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE JUNIOR COLLEGES

SUBJECTS AND SUBJECT-GROUPS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS			NUMBER MAKING NO OFFERING			RANGE IN NUMBERS OF SEMESTER HOURS			AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OFFERING		
	Pub- lic	Priv- ate	All	Pub- lic	Priv- ate	All	Pub- lic	Priv- ate	All	Pub- lic	Priv- ate	All
English.....	17.7	16.9	17.1	1*	0	1	0-33	6-40	0-40	6.9	8.9	8.0
Public speaking.....	3.0	2.8	2.9	13	24	37	0-18	0-27	0-27	1.2	1.5	1.3
Ancient languages.....	12.8	19.5	16.9	8	1	9	0-41	0-47	0-47	5.0	10.3	7.8
Modern foreign languages.....	42.1	38.6	40.0	0	0	0	18-88	10-90	10-90	16.3	20.3	18.5
Mathematics.....	19.3	13.6	15.9	1	1	2	0-33	0-30	0-33	7.6	7.2	7.4
Science.....	44.5	22.6	29.9	1	2	3	0-99	0-57	0-99	17.5	10.7	13.9
Social subjects.....	27.5	18.9	22.3	1	0	1	0-45	3-43	0-45	10.8	9.9	10.3
Bible and religion.....	0.0	3.9	2.3	23	14	37	0-0	0-12	0-12	0.0	2.0	1.1
Philosophy.....	2.4	1.9	2.1	13	19	32	0-10	0-6	0-10	0.9	1.0	1.0
Psychology.....	3.1	2.9	3.0	8	11	19	0-9	0-10	0-10	1.2	1.5	1.4
Physical education.....	2.7	2.4	2.5	11	23	34	0-12	0-20	0-20	1.0	1.3	1.2
Music.....	8.8	4.4	6.2	16	22	38	0-88	0-32	0-88	3.5	2.3	2.9
Art.....	3.1	4.9	4.2	16	21	37	0-24	0-50	0-50	1.2	2.6	2.0
Agriculture.....	5.8	1.1	3.0	17	33	50	0-29	0-34	0-34	2.3	0.6	1.4
Commerce.....	26.7	0.5	10.9	6	33	39	0-114	0-10	0-114	10.4	0.3	5.1
Education.....	5.3	9.7	7.9	17	6	23	0-56	0-43	0-56	2.1	5.1	3.7
Engineering and industrial.....	16.6	10.7	13.1	6	29	35	0-74	0-230	0-230	6.5	5.6	6.1
Home economics.....	9.8	16.0	12.5	11	14	25	0-57	0-83	0-83	3.8	8.4	6.3
Other occupational.....	3.8	0.7	1.9	17	34	51	0-47	0-25	0-47	1.5	0.4	0.9
All subjects.....	255.0	189.7	215.7	94- 628	54- 627	54- 628

* This school offers "English of Commerce" which has been tabulated under commerce.

The average total offering for all schools is shown to be somewhat in excess of two hundred semester hours. The averages for the two groups show a difference in favor of public institutions of something over sixty semester hours. The range of offering is very wide, being from 54 to 628 in the entire group of colleges.

When the data for municipal institutions alone in the public junior-college group are used—that is, when data for state junior

colleges established in normal schools and elsewhere are removed from the group—the average for public junior colleges drops to 219 semester hours, and the range becomes 94 to 411. Similarly, when from the data for private junior colleges are removed those for three institutions which are at the present time offering work beyond the second year but claim still to be performing the junior-college functions¹, the average for this group is reduced to 160.4, and the range becomes 54 to 335. The typical difference is just as apparent as when first given. The average for the total of 48 junior colleges, both public and private, thus remaining is 180 semester hours and the range is 54 to 411.

The columns of this table offer some important facts and interesting comparisons. To interpret the situation carefully it is necessary to give attention to the first, second, and last groups of these columns in conjunction. The comparisons would have been made more significant if space could have been spared for the distributions of amounts of work in each field, as well as for those measures which have been introduced. The method of interpretation will be illustrated by reference to the facts concerning English, the first subject listed. It may be seen that for all schools the average number of semester hours in the offering in this field is 17.1, and that the averages for the two groups are almost equal (first group of columns); that no school² fails to offer some work in this field (second group of columns); that the range in all schools is 0-40 hours with no great difference between the ranges for the two groups of schools (third group of columns); and that the average percentage of the total offering devoted to English is 8.0 for all schools, approximately 1 per cent less than this for the public, and about as much greater for the private institutions. The difference of 2 per cent between the two groups of schools, notwithstanding the approximate equality of the average numbers of hours shown in the first group of columns, is explained by the difference in the average total number of semester hours in all lines of work already referred to. With a smaller average total in all subjects

¹ In these instances, work on the junior-college level only was included in the tabulations.

² See footnote to Table I.

the same amount of work in any one subject would constitute a larger percentage.

The relative importance of the several subjects or subject-groups in the offerings of all institutions may be judged by glancing down the third column of figures in the first and last groups of columns. These show that the schools tend to make much the largest single offering and the largest proportion of the total offering in the modern foreign languages. Next in order follow science, the social subjects, English, ancient languages, and mathematics. Fields receiving little emphasis measured in this way are public speaking, Bible and religion, philosophy, psychology, physical education, music, art, agriculture, and other occupational subjects. Lines of work whose extent of recognition lies between that for these two extremes are commerce, home economics, engineering and industrial courses, and education. By adding the percentages for the ancient and modern foreign languages it will be seen that more than one-fourth of the total offering in all junior colleges is in the field of foreign language. By adding the percentages for subjects in the list beginning with agriculture and ending with other occupational, a group apparently designed to recognize occupational aspects of training, a total of slightly less than one-fourth is obtained.

Comparisons of the figures for the two major types of institutions, public and private, bring out some interesting similarities and contrasts. The fields in which the average amounts of work are approximately equal are English (as has already been indicated), public speaking, modern foreign languages, philosophy, psychology, physical education, and art. In the cases of these fields, approximately equivalent proportions of each group of schools make no offering. For the reason given above in dealing with English as an illustration, these average percentages are somewhat greater for private than for public junior colleges.

In the fields of mathematics, science, the social subjects, music, commerce, agriculture, engineering and industrial, and other occupational courses, the average numbers of hours and the average percentages of the total are greater for public than for private junior colleges. On the other hand, in the four fields of ancient languages, Bible and religion, home economics, and education the

private junior colleges tend to outdo the public institutions. The difference between the two groups as concerns Bible and religion is explained by the denominational character of most of the private schools. Their excess of offering in home economics grows out of the large proportion of women's institutions among them. The larger amount of education is explained by the location of the majority of them in southern states and the different standards of teacher-training there obtaining. In the states in which most public junior colleges are established, elementary-school teachers are trained in state normal schools, and high-school teachers receive most of their special occupational training in the last two years of the four-year college course.

Consistent with the contrasts pointed out are the numbers in each group of junior colleges shown not to be offering work in the subject-groups named.

With the few exceptions noted, the comparison shows the public junior colleges tending to make the less conservative offering, the private junior colleges tending to hold somewhat more closely to materials traditionally acceptable.

THE PRESCRIPTIONS

The subjects or subject-groups in which the junior colleges make prescriptions to which all students are held are listed in Table II. This table shows also the numbers of each type of school and of all schools designating such prescriptions. In a small proportion of instances the student is exempt from a requirement if he offers for entrance a certain number of units of work in that field or subject. Work in English (usually the equivalent of Freshman English in colleges and universities) is easily the most frequent requirement. Then follow social subjects (almost always history), physical training, foreign language (more commonly modern), and science. Mathematics and religion are the only other fields at all commonly recognized in requirements. Often specific courses or subjects are required; less frequently the requirement is within a group of courses.

The data here presented also make apparent another contrast—a striking one—between the two types of schools: the private junior colleges prescribe much more frequently than do the public

junior colleges. The only subjects at all frequently made obligatory in the latter are English and physical training. This contrast is also emphasized in a computation of the amounts of work prescribed which is not presented in the table. These data show a total of less than nine semester hours in nineteen of the twenty-three public junior colleges, but in only six of the thirty-five private institutions. In the latter group all but nine have a total prescription of more than twenty semester hours.

TABLE II
NUMBERS OF JUNIOR COLLEGES PRESCRIBING WORK IN CERTAIN SUBJECTS AND
SUBJECT-GROUPS

Subject or Subject-Group	Public Junior Colleges	Private Junior Colleges	All
English.....	14	29	43
Public speaking.....		4	4
Foreign language.....	2	23	25
Mathematics.....	2	15	17
Science.....	3	18	21
Social subjects.....	3*	23†	26
Philosophy.....		3	3
Psychology.....		3	3
Bible and religion.....		15	15
Library.....		1	1
History of art.....		1	1
Mathematics or logic.....	1	5	6
Physical training.....	11	15	26

* History in all cases.

† History in all cases except three, for one of which it is economics, while for two it is history and sociology.

The full meaning of these contrasts does not become apparent without recalling that the total amount of credit required for graduation from the junior college is typically sixty to sixty-four hours (exclusive of physical training). Where the requirements are extensive, the options must be much restricted. Another factor operating to restrict the adjustment of programs for individuals is the small total number of hours and the narrow range of work offered in some institutions. This is partially indicated in the figures at the foot of Table I, but would be more apparent if space were taken to illustrate this restriction. Meager total offerings under some circumstances operate just as do prescriptions, even though the latter may not be specifically designated.

[To be concluded]